

Proposal for Itzhak Rabin's Day of Remembrance Ceremony



We have chosen to dedicate this ceremony to the theme of **peace**.

The first part focuses on peace as the ability to embrace diversity of opinions and multiple voices. A peace that can be sustained even in the presence of disagreement.

The second part addresses war and peace, recalling Yitzhak Rabin's final struggle: to achieve peace between Israel and its neighbours, a struggle that ended in his assassination at the close of a peace rally.

It is possible to select one of the parts or follow the entire sequence. Each part begins with an opening narration and includes 2–3 texts that may be read from the stage. Quotations from Rabin are also included and may be projected as a backdrop. In addition, each part has a song that can be played or sung together.

In a community setting, it is recommended to include speakers from within the community. In communities where it is appropriate, the ceremony may conclude with the singing of Hatikvah. In a family setting, the texts can serve as a basis for dialogue and study.

Recommendations

- Scenery: Israeli flag, memorial candle, images of Rabin Square after the assassination.
- White shirts for the narrators.
- Projecting the texts or distributing them among the audience may encourage greater engagement.
- For the closing of the event: It is recommended to prepare in advance stone pebbles and permanent markers.



Narration

On Saturday night, November 4, 1995 (12th of Cheshvan, 5756), Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was assassinated by a Jewish extremist, at the close of a peace rally in Tel Aviv. His assassination, thirty years ago, shook not only Israeli society but also deeply wounded the entire Jewish world.

We gather here today not only to remember the man, but also to honor the path he chose to walk. His assassination was a defining moment in Israeli society, and its shockwaves were felt across Israel and throughout the Diaspora.

Yitzhak Rabin's vision extended far beyond the borders of the State. He understood that the strength of the Jewish people lay not only in its homeland but also in its unity as a global community – one that links Israel and the Diaspora through mutual support and a shared purpose. His leadership embodied the conviction that a secure Israel and thriving Jewish communities worldwide are bound together by a bond that cannot be broken.

Even in this challenging time, when the reality of war and profound internal turmoil in Israel weakens the sense of connection that some Jews feel toward the country, and even within their own communities, we – members of the Jewish community around the world – pledge to dedicate this day to learning and action, so that we may heal, grow, and build a better future.

(Projection of the image of Rabin Square)

Projection

On Peace and Disagreement

I am well aware of the tremendous contribution of religious Zionism to the State of Israel and the Jewish people. The fact that its supporters are so passionate in their views on the peace process is, perhaps ironically, the best testimony to their commitment to Zionism. But no less Zionist are the views of those who believe that *Am Yisrael* [the Jewish people] takes precedence over Greater *Eretz Yisrael* [the land of Israel].

I am deeply disturbed if the public debate on the peace process is perceived by some as a debate of religious versus non-religious. There are secular Jews who vehemently oppose the peace process just as there are religious Jews who fervently support it. The decisions which my Government and I have taken are not rooted in hate toward Judaism, but in *ahavat Yisrael* [love of one's fellow Jew] in the fervent hope that never again will a father say kaddish for his fallen son, never again will our *hevre kaddishah* [burial societies] scour the streets for the bloodied remains, never again will a bar mitzvah read maftir for the first time without his father by his side.

Y. Rabin in a letter to Rabbi Lord Sacks Written by Rabin mere days before the Assassination. Delivered to Rabbi Sacks after the funeral.

Narration

In Jewish tradition, disagreement is not a danger but an opportunity. It allows for diversity, attentive listening, and greater depth of meaning. The real danger emerges when differing opinions are silenced or left unaddressed, turning instead into destructive conflict. Two foundational principles of Jewish tradition teach us: *“These and those are the words of the living God”* and *“The opinion of the majority prevails”*. These affirm a core belief – that there is room for multiple traditions, interpretations, and perspectives. When the reality of plurality is denied, and no agreement exists on the rules of discourse, the community grows weaker, and society loses its inner strength.

“There are those who mistakenly think that world peace will be built only through uniformity of opinions and traits... but this is not so. True peace can come to the world only through the value of diversity within peace... when all sides and all approaches are revealed, and it becomes clear how each has its place, each according to its value and character.”

— *Rabbi Abraham Isaac HaCohen Kook, Ein Ayah on Berachot 9, 61*

The Place Where We Are Right

by Yehuda Amichai

From the place where we are right
flowers will never grow
in the spring.

The place where we are right
is hard and trampled
like a yard.
But doubts and loves
dig up the world
like a mole, a plough.

And a whisper will be heard in the place
where the ruined
house once stood.

—
This is a day of shared responsibility, rooted in a collective memory – the memory of the assassination and the abyss it revealed.

Honored guests, it is fitting to teach the generation that does not remember November 1995 about the life of Yitzhak Rabin: a soldier, the liberator of Jerusalem, Chief of Staff of the IDF, a leader, a public servant, and a pursuer of peace.

Each year, on this day, we warn against baseless hatred and fratricidal strife, against incitement, and against the violence that erodes the foundations of democracy. Only we can decide whether to apply the lesson. Only history will testify whether we have truly learned it.

— *Reuven Rivlin, former President of Israel, at the official state memorial for Yitzhak Rabin, marking 24 years since his assassination.*

Closing

Narration

Rabin's assassination stands as a stark reminder of what can happen when factions of a society come to see one another as 'other' and enemy. Healthy argument can provide one crucial antidote to such escalation, channeling societal conflicts into greater cohesion, problem – solving, and capacity to find ways forward together.

Let us mark Yom Rabin as a Day of Healthy Argument and to offer tools to help communities confront, honor, and learn even from enduring and passionate differences.

– Rabbi Melissa Weintraub, Co-CEO, Resetting the Table

Even in times of deep polarization, we will continue to seek the paths of listening, mutual responsibility, and peace.

Song

Who is the Man?

Who is the man who desires life,
and loves many days, that he may see
good? Keep your tongue from evil,
and your lips from speaking deceit. Turn
away from evil and do good; seek peace
and pursue it.

Mi Halsh?

chafetz –ish he-ha Michayim
Ohev yamim lirot tov
Netzor leshoncha me-ra
Usfatecha midaber mirmah
Sur me-ra va'aseh tov
Bakeish shalom ve-radfehu

מי האיש?

מי האיש החפץ חיים
אהב ימים לראות טוב
נצר לשונך מרע
ושפתיך מדבר מרמה
סור מרע ועשה טוב
בקש שלום ורדפהו

Narration

War and Peace

"The Holy One, blessed be He, found no vessel that could hold blessing for Israel except peace" (Mishnah, Tractate Uktzin 3:12). All the blessings in the world cannot endure without peace.

Peace is a foundational value in Jewish tradition and in democratic society. In times of bloody war, let us remember the leader who was killed for his conviction that only through peace can the next war be prevented.

Projection

"...It all starts and ends with the spirit. Our soldiers prevailed not by their weapons but by their awareness of their supreme mission, by their awareness of the righteousness of their cause, by their deep love for their homeland and by their recognition of the difficult task laid upon them – to ensure the existence of our people in our homeland, to defend, even at the price of their own lives, the right of the Jewish people to live in their own state, free, independent and in peace.

This army, which I had the privilege of commanding during this war, came from the people and returns to the people – to the people who rise in their hour of crisis and overcome all enemies by virtue of their moral stature and spiritual readiness in the hour of need..."

– Rabin as Commander in chief Mount Scopus 1967

Narration

Yitzhak Rabin, the Chief of Staff who spoke on Mount Scopus mere days after the Six-Day War and expressed in his speech a tragic understanding of the defeated enemy's anguish – is the same Yitzhak Rabin who, in his final speech at the peace rally, gave voice to the spirit of a new Israel: humane, pragmatic, realistic, and peace seeking. We will continue to walk in his restrained and resolute path – with one exception: we will no longer hide our emotions.

Openly and with a clear voice, we shall now say that peace and democracy are not merely engineering projects, but yearnings of the soul. We will say it without hesitation. And at times, we will even sing it "with a great cry"...

– Amos Oz, *"That Which You Loved, Yitzhak"*

Song

Song for Peace

Let the sun rise
light up the morning
The purest of prayers
will not bring us back

He whose candle was snuffed out
and was buried in the dust
bitter crying won't wake him up
and won't bring him back

Nobody will bring us back
from a dead and darkened pit here,
neither the victory cheer
nor songs of praise will help

So just sing a song for peace
don't whisper a prayer
Just sing a song for peace
in a loud shout

Allow the sun to penetrate
through the flowers
don't look back
let go of those departed

Lift your eyes with hope
not through the rifles' sights
sing a song for love
and not for wars

Don't say the day will come
bring on that day
because it is not a dream
and in all the city squares
cheer only for peace

So just sing a song for peace...

Shir Lashalom

Tnu lashemesh la'alot
Laboker le'ha'ir
Hazakah shebatfilot
Otanu lo tachzir

Mi asher kava nero
U've'afar nitman
Bechi mar lo ya'iro
Lo yachziro le'chan

Ish otanu lo yashiv
Mibor tachtit a'fel
Kan lo yo'ilu
Lo simchat hanitzachon
Velo shirei hallel

Lachen rak shiru shir lashalom
Al tilchashu tfilah
Lachen rak shiru shir lashalom
Bitze'aka gdolah

Tnu lashemesh lachador
Miba'ad laprachim
Al tabitu le'achor
Hanichu la'holchim

S'u eina'yim betikvah
Lo derech kavanot
Shiru shir la'ahavah
Velo lamilchamot

Al tagidu yom yavo
Havi'u et hayom
Ki lo chalom hu
Uve'chol hakikarot
Hari'u rak shalom

Lachen rak shiru shir lashalom...

שיר לשלום

תנו לשמש לעלות
לבוקר להאיר
הזכה שבתפילות
אותנו לא תחזיר

מי אשר כבה נרו
ובעפר נטמן
בכי מר לא יעירו
לא יחזירו לכאן

איש אותנו לא ישיב
מבור תחתית אפל
כאן לא יועילו
לא שמחת הניצחון
ולא שירי הלל

לכן רק שירו שיר לשלום
אל תלחשו תפילה
מוטב תשירו שיר לשלום
בצעקה גדולה

תנו לשמש לחדור
מבעד לפרחים
אל תביטו לאחור
הניחו להולכים

שאו עיניים בתקווה
לא דרך כוונות
שירו שיר לאהבה
ולא למלחמות

אל תגידו יום יבוא
הביאו את היום
כי לא חלום
הוא ובכל הכיכרות
הריעו רק שלום

לכן רק שירו שיר לשלום...

Narration

Now, more than ever, we must follow his path and speak out clearly against violence, terror, and extremism in all their forms. We must heed his lessons and make use of every opening, every opportunity, on the journey toward peace.

As President Obama said on his last visit to Jerusalem – and as Yitzhak Rabin demonstrated until he drew his final breath – peace is necessary, peace is just, and peace is possible.

Yitzhak Rabin taught us the importance of striving for a better future, and reminded us of our duty – each and every day – to do everything in our power to advance a shared vision of a more secure and peaceful future.

For this, we owe him a profound debt of gratitude.

– From the words of Ambassador Dan Shapiro on the 20th anniversary of Rabin's assassination

Closing Words

Narration

Today, as we face an increasingly complex and polarized world, Rabin's commitment to peace, democracy, and security speaks to us with renewed urgency. Political divisions run deep, competing narratives fuel confusion, and both Israel and Jewish communities worldwide grapple with unprecedented challenges, both internal and external. Antisemitism is rising across the globe, while democratic institutions come under pressure from within and without.

In this turbulent landscape, Rabin's legacy serves as our guiding star – a reminder of his unwavering belief in peace, in democracy, and in the understanding that true security stems from the courage to pursue justice and coexistence. As we mark this 30th anniversary, we do more than honor a fallen leader; we recommit ourselves to building the just, secure, and peaceful world he envisioned – a world in which Jewish communities everywhere can flourish, and where the pursuit of peace remains our highest calling.

May his memory be a blessing, and may his vision continue to light our way forward.

Song

He Who Makes Peace in the Heights

He who makes peace in His high places
May He bring peace upon us
And upon all Israel
And say ye Amen.

May He bring peace, may He bring peace
Peace upon us and on all of Israel
May He bring peace, may He bring peace
Peace upon us and on all of Israel.

Oseh Shalom Bimromav

Oseh shalom bimromav
Hu ya'a'se shalom aleynu
ve'al kol israel
ve'imro, imro amen.

ya'a'se shalom, ya'a'se shalom
shalom aleynu ve'al kol israel
ya'a'se shalom, ya'a'se shalom
shalom aleynu ve'al kol israel.

עושה שלום במרומיו

עושה שלום במרומיו
הוא יעשה שלום עלינו
ועל כל עם ישראל
ואמרו, אמרו אמן.

יעשה שלום, יעשה שלום
שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל
יעשה שלום, יעשה שלום
שלום עלינו ועל כל ישראל.

Closing Ceremony

Narration

In Jewish tradition, it is customary to place a stone on a grave – a symbol that memory endures even when life does not.

As we conclude this memorial ceremony, we return to a complex and broken reality, carrying with us the memory of the words, the actions, and the values that defined the person, his legacy, and his time.

Please take a stone and write on it a single word – a word we must carry with us from that moment into the future we are all called to build.

We invite the audience to place the stones at the front of the stage after the singing of Hatikvah.

Hatikva

The Hope

For as long as deeply in the inner heart
The Jewish soul continues to long,
And to the distant edges of the East,
forward
The eye continues to gaze toward Zion,

Not yet has our dearest hope been lost,
The hope that for two thousand years
has been,
To be a free people in our own land,
The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

Hatikva

Kol 'od balevav p'nimah
Nefesh Y'hudi homiyah,
Ulfa'atei mizrah kadimah
'Ayin l'tziyon tzofiyah,

'Od lo avdah tikvatenu,
Hatikvah bat shnot alpayim,
Lihyot 'am hofshi b'artzenu,
Eretz Tziyon viYrushalayim.

התקווה

כָּל עוֹד בַּלֵּב פְּנִימָה
נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדִי הוֹמִיָּה
וּלְפָאֵתִי מִזְרַח קְדִימָה
עֵין לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפִיָּה

עוֹד לֹא אֲבָדָה תִּקְוַתֵּנוּ
הַתִּקְוָה בֵּת שְׁנוֹת אֲלָפִים
לִהְיוֹת עַם חִפְשִׁי בְּאַרְצֵנוּ
אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם